

Press release: Blackpool, Bradford and Lake District to benefit from £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

Three major cultural projects across the North of England will receive a share of the £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, Arts, Heritage and Tourism Minister Michael Ellis announced today.

The fund, which was created to build a lasting regional legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North, will support diverse projects in Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District.

A total of £4 million will help transform the vacant former Bradford Odeon cinema into a 4,000 capacity live music, entertainment and events venue.

Nearly £3.3 million will enhance the visitor experience at cultural attractions across the Lake District, the UK's newest World Heritage Site.

A further £4 million will be used to create a museum in Blackpool that will celebrate the town's history as the UK's first mass seaside holiday resort.

Michael Ellis, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, said:

"These exciting projects will provide a true cultural legacy for people across the North that increases tourism, boosts local economies and creates jobs for the future. They reflect the diversity and unique identity of Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District and will enable them to realise their exciting cultural ambitions."

Exchequer Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

"The UK has the most vibrant cultural scene and creative industry in the world today, but we want to ensure that reaches all parts of the country and that every young person has access to cultural experiences and opportunities. That's why we are investing these resources to ensure there is a lasting legacy for the upcoming Great Exhibition of the North, driving the region's economic and cultural success."

Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry, said:

"These multi-million pound cultural investments in Blackpool, Bradford and the Lake District represent a major economic and cultural boost for the Northern Powerhouse. From converting a vacant cinema into a state-of-the-art venue to improving access to the UK's newest World Heritage site, these investments will have a transformative effect, benefitting local communities by creating new jobs while increasing tourism from across the UK and further afield."

Eleven towns and cities from across the North of England bid for a share of the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, which encourages sustainable cultural and creative regeneration in the Northern Powerhouse and will benefit areas with historically low levels of cultural and creative investment.

As well as the three capital projects, a new fund providing access to finance for the cultural sector and creative industries in the North of England will be created.

Bradford Odeon – The 1930s twin domed cinema has been vacant since 2000. The redevelopment will be one of the biggest of its type in the country outside of London and will bring Bradford back on the national touring circuit. The venue, due to be run by NEC Group International, will aim to put on around 225 events to more than 270,000 people every year, creating 50 jobs in the city. The project is being led by a not-for-profit social enterprise, Bradford Live, assisted by Bradford Council.

Blackpool museum – Due to open in 2020, the museum will display artefacts, music and performances from within Blackpool and partners including the V&A, EMI Group Archive Trust and the British Music Hall Society. The museum – the biggest new museum development in the North West – is expected to attract almost 300,000 visitors a year and will be developed on the world-famous Golden Mile. It will aim to engage younger audiences in the history of Blackpool and further strengthen the town's tourism offer.

Lake District – £3.29 million will be invested in a project to strengthen the visitor experience at Windermere Jetty, Dove Cottage, the Wordsworth Museum and Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Museum. The money will be used to enhance the visitor experience at these attractions, increase accessibility and improve exhibition spaces. The regeneration project aims to attract nearly 150,000 additional visitors, create or maintain 150 permanent jobs and boost cultural tourism to the newly designated World Heritage Site.

The projects will build on the impact of the Great Exhibition of the North, which launches in Newcastle-Gateshead on June 22. The event is set to be the biggest in England this year and will showcase the best of Northern art, culture and innovation.

Notes to editors: The bids were coordinated by Local Enterprise Partnerships in Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Humber, Lancashire, Leeds City Region, Liverpool City Region, North East, Sheffield City Region, Tees Valley, and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding.

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